
ENVIRONMENTAL Fact Sheet



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Permitting a Septage Treatment Facility in New Hampshire

What is a Septage Treatment Facility?

Septage is defined in state statute RSA 485-A:2, IX-a as: “material removed from septic tanks, cesspools, holding tanks, or other sewage treatment storage units, excluding sewage sludge from public treatment works and industrial waste and any other sludge.” Septage includes solids and other material removed from septage lagoons, waste from portable toilet and Type III marine sanitation devices, and grease trap waste that has been co-mingled with wastewater. The New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services further defines septage to include solids and other material removed from septage lagoons, waste from portable toilet and Type III marine sanitation devices, and grease trap waste that has been co-mingled with wastewater. A *septage treatment facility* is defined as a location or system for the processing, treatment, or disposal of septage, other than land application. Facilities include, but are not limited to, lagoons, septage treatment facilities, and innovative/alternative waste treatment or research and development facilities. Facilities do not include septage holding or storage/transfer tanks.

According to Env-Wq 1603.01, which is part of DES’s *Septage Management Rule*, persons wishing to manage septage outside of a location regulated under RSA 485-A:13 (wastewater treatment plants), RSA 149-M (solid waste facility) or RSA 485-C (groundwater management) must first obtain a site, facility, transfer/storage permit or septage holding permit-by-notification issued in accordance with Env-Wq 1600. The person proposing to undertake septage management activities at a facility shall apply for a facility permit through DES’s Wastewater Engineering Bureau.

Why Permit a Septage Treatment Facility?

There are many economical, environmental and public health reasons for people, businesses and municipalities to develop and maintain a septage treatment facility. In addition, RSA 485-A:5-b requires that every New Hampshire municipality provide or assure access to a septage disposal facility for its residents. As the population in New Hampshire increases, so does the demand for practical septage solutions. Approximately 65 percent of existing and 80 percent of the new housing in New Hampshire relies on septic systems to manage their wastewater. Consequently, each year more and more septage is being generated. Although more than 75 percent of New Hampshire's septage is disposed at wastewater treatment plants, the increased volume of septage can be problematic for treatment plants that have reach their design flow capacity. This fosters the need to develop new septage treatment capacity.

What is the Procedure for Permitting a Septage Treatment Facility?

A facility permit application must be completed, including all attachments, signatures and public notifications, and submitted to DES. The required information includes but is not limited to:

- Applicant and applicant's business information.
- Information about the location of the proposed facility.
- Who will be operating the facility and when.
- Types of septage management activities being proposed at the facility.
- A Facility Plan prepared in accordance with Env-Wq 1609.07 or 1611.08.
- A Management Plan prepared in accordance with Env-Wq 1609.08 or 1611.09.
- A Closure Plan prepared in accordance with Env-Wq 1609.10 or 1611.11.
- A statement signed by the applicant certifying:
 - The applicant has complied with the notification requirements of Env-Wq 1604.01.
 - All operators of the facility have been instructed on the requirements of Env-Wq 1600 or shall be instructed prior to working at the facility.
 - A copy of the application had been given to the governing body of the municipality in which the activity is proposed to occur.
 - The information submitted is accurate.
 - The applicant has not been convicted of a misdemeanor under any statute administered by the department within the five years prior to the date of application, or of a felony in any state or federal court during the ten years prior to the date of application.

All septage treatment facilities must be designed and operated in accordance with the Facility Standards in Env-Wq 1609.09 or 1611.11.

Each application shall be signed by the applicant, submitted in duplicate, and accompanied by the \$1,000 fee specified in Env-Wq 1609.05 or 1611.06. Any New Hampshire municipality or political subdivision that applies for a facility permit is exempt from paying the fee. Once DES considers the permit application complete, DES will notify the applicant and the governing body of the municipality where the facility will be located. The DES will publish a public notice in a local paper of a 30-day comment period on the complete application. If 10 property owners from the municipality where the activity is to be located provide written requests for a public hearing, then DES will organize the hearing and publish a public notice in a local paper scheduling the hearing. Following the hearing, the department shall issue a facility permit if it meets criteria specified in Env-Wq 1609.06 or 1611.07.

How to Obtain a Septage Treatment Facility Permit Application?

The Septage Management Rules, Env-Wq 1600, can be obtained by visiting the DES website at http://www.des.nh.gov/rules/desadmin_list.htm, and Septage Facility application forms can be obtained by visiting the DES Wastewater Engineering Bureau website at <http://des.nh.gov/www/septslud.htm> or by calling the Residuals Management Section at (603) 271-7888.